

**4. ESTABLISHMENT OF CONFERENCE AND SIMILAR EVENTS
BRIDGING LOAN FUND**

RR 11022

Officer responsible Leisure Manager	Author Peter Walls and Ian Hay
Corporate Plan Output: Grants Administration	

The purpose of this report is to establish a Conference and Similar Events Bridging Loan Fund which would be used to encourage major conferences and similar events to the city. The Metropolitan Funding Subcommittee requested that this report be prepared and presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee for consideration.

BACKGROUND

Over past years the Council has been approached on a regular basis to support conferences, congresses and major events that are to be hosted in the city and in many instances the Events Seeding Fund has not been able to provide the support requested by the organisers of these functions. Many of these requests are as a result of the knowledge within the local event and conference industry in respect of the operation of the Council's Events Seeding Fund which has supported in some small way many of the conferences that are held within the city, either with actual expenses or costs associated with bidding for these conferences.

Many local committees organising conferences require initial financial support up until the time that registrations are received and therefore it would seem appropriate to establish a Conference and Similar Events Bridging Loan Fund to assist them to prepare for the actual conference or event once it has been awarded to Christchurch.

This concept was presented to the Metropolitan Funding Subcommittee at its meeting on 21 September and the Committee requested that a report be prepared for consideration by the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Currently the Council has made available resources via a loan for the IUPS Conference and when registrations are received these funds will be repaid to the Council. It is anticipated that this Conference (IUPS) will attract in excess of 4,000 international registrations which will contribute considerable economic activity and benefit to Christchurch.

PROPOSAL

The proposed Conference and Similar Events Bridging Loan Fund would be used in conjunction with the Events Seeding Fund to assist with not only the bidding for major conferences and events but also to support the conference organising committees along the following lines.

The Events Seeding Fund could be used to assist with the preparation of bidding documents etc to attempt to procure major conferences, congresses and events for the city and also to provide small sponsorship for these conferences and events. The Conference and Similar Events Bridging Loan Fund would be utilised to provide bridging finance to organisers to allow them to promote, market and prepare initial requirements for major events and conferences, and the fund would be repaid by first call on registrations.

It would seem appropriate that the current resources being made available to the IUPS Conference, when repaid in 2001, should be utilised to establish a Conference and Similar Events Bridging Loan Fund. All loans provided would be subject to a loan agreement which would set out all conditions and requirements of the organisers as is the case with the current document in place for the IUPS Conference.

Any guidelines that were established for this fund would need to give preference/priority to conferences and events which utilise the Christchurch City Council facilities, i.e. Town Hall, Convention Centre, Sports & Entertainment Centre etc.

As the loan fund would operate in conjunction with the Events Seeding Fund it is suggested that the Metropolitan Funding Subcommittee administer the proposed Conference and Similar Events Bridging Loan Fund.

A further key issue in respect of the operation of this fund would be that it would need to be for international conferences likely to attract a significant number of registrations or a national conference of a long duration, say five days plus, before being eligible for support. This would mean that any support provided from this fund would have significant economic impact not only to the city but would also have positive financial implication for the City Council facilities that were utilised.

A formal loan document would be prepared for each loan along the lines of the document prepared by Buddle Findlay for the New Zealand Physiological Conference Society Incorporated and would include the key conditions and requirements of that document which would be appropriately reworded for each successful applicant organisation.

- Recommendation:**
1. That consideration be given to establishing and building up a Conference and Similar Events Bridging Loan Fund in the Annual Plan for 2000/01 and subsequent years.
 2. That authority be delegated to the Councillors on the Metropolitan Funding Subcommittee to administer the Conference and Similar Events Bridging Loan Fund.

3. That the Subcommittee's decisions be reported to the Strategy and Resources Committee.
4. That a set of operational guidelines based on the above information be prepared for the Conference and Similar Events Bridging Loan Fund for approval by the Strategy and Resources Committee.
5. That for each loan approved, a loan agreement be prepared along the lines of the document prepared by Buddle Findlay for the New Zealand Physiological Conference Society Incorporated.